



WHAT TYPE OF HOUSING DO YOU WANT

Things to Consider

The intent of this document is to help you through the decision making process when developing Migrant Farmworker Housing (MFH).

Please keep in mind the information given is generic. Your specific housing needs and the solutions you develop will most likely vary from the examples. Your specific housing needs may require a unique approach or an innovative combination of existing solutions. A list of advantages and disadvantages for each housing type or location you consider may assist you in arriving at a decision.

Migrant Farmworker Housing can be separated into 2 major divisions, “On Farm” and “Off Farm.” The following discussion will address the major concerns of developing and operating each type of housing. Specifics on the requirements for MFH can be found in the regulations.

If you have questions, please call the MFH Program at 1-800-771-1206

“ON-FARM” MIGRANT FARMWORKER HOUSING

Advantages

- Grower has better direct control of housing
- Workers like to be close to their work site
- Transportation of workers is minimized
- Simpler zoning and building requirements
- Possible low cost loans may be available
- Housing can be expanded to meet future needs
- Other use of housing during off season
- Renting to other growers during off season
- Not subject to rent increases or loss of rented housing
- Grower can charge a damage deposit and collect rent to help off-set maintenance costs

Disadvantages

- Farm space is used
- Property taxes might increase
- Maintenance costs
- Congestion caused by housing or workers
- Capital funds used for housing and infrastructure
- For larger camps, obtaining water rights may be a problem

“OFF-FARM” GROWER OWNED MIGRANT FARMWORKER HOUSING

Advantages

- Grower has better direct control of housing
- Housing might be expanded as needed
- Other use of housing during off season
- Renting to other growers during off season
- Not subject to rent increases or loss of rented housing
- Farm space is not used for housing
- Congestion caused by workers is located off farm
- Grower can charge a damage deposit and collect rent to help off-set maintenance costs

Disadvantages

- Property taxes might increase
- Maintenance costs
- Capital funds used for housing and infrastructure
- Existing land use and building requirements must be met
- Workers dislike being housed away from work site
- Transportation of workers is required
- Low cost loans might not be available

“OFF-FARM” RENTED MIGRANT FARMWORKER HOUSING

Advantages

- Farm space is not used for housing
- Property taxes are not a direct factor
- Maintenance cost are usually limited
- Congestion caused by workers is located off farm
- No capital funds used for housing and infrastructure

Disadvantages

- Grower may have less direct control of housing
- Workers dislike being housed away from work site
- Transportation of workers is required
- Low cost loans may not be available
- Housing might not be expandable or usable next season
- Limited use of housing during off season
- Housing might be subject to rent increases or loss of rented housing

REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL TYPES OF MIGRANT FARMWORKER HOUSING

Housing Site Requirements

- The site used for migrant farm worker housing must be:
 - Adequately drained and not subject to periodic flooding;
 - Located a distance of at least two hundred feet from all surface water;
 - Located so the drainage from, and through, the migrant farmworker housing will not endanger any domestic or public water supply;
 - Graded, ditched, and made free from depressions which allow water to become a nuisance;
 - Adequate in size to prevent overcrowding of necessary structures; and
 - Located on a slope which is not more than one unit (inches, feet, etc.) vertical per twenty units horizontal.
- Any structure used for sleeping or preparing and serving food must be located at least five hundred (500) feet from any area in which livestock is kept.
- All migrant farmworker housing structures must be located a minimum of ten feet from any other structure or building.

Building Requirements

- Built to comply either with WAC 246-359 (the Temporary Worker Housing (TWH) building code) or the Uniform Building Code of the local government jurisdiction. Only housing built in rural areas can utilize the TWH building code. See code for details.
- TWH buildings must provide facilities for sleeping, food prep and storage, showering, laundry, toilets, hand washing and personal item storage. See code for details.
- All electrical wiring and equipment must comply with the L & I code requirements. Electricity must be supplied to all habitable rooms. See code for details.
- Housing must be heated and insulated (minimum of R-11) when it is occupied from Oct 1 to May 1. Also heating must be provided to all habitable rooms (including bathrooms) that are used during cold weather.
- In rural areas, land use zone codes are limited to regulating building heights and set-backs.

Water Supply

- All MFH facilities must be provided with safe water from a system approved by the WA State Dept. of Health, Division of Drinker Water. Water may come from an on-site well or from a nearby community system. See code for details.
- For large camp populations, a new well might require a water right permit. Please contact the Washington State Dept. of Ecology for additional information on how to obtain a water right permit.

Sewage Disposal

- In rural areas, sewage disposal is usually accomplished using a septic tank and drain field system. However, please contact your local County Health Dept. for detailed specifics on the use of these systems for your housing location.
- Housing located within urban areas and/or cities may have access to city sewers.

Road Traffic

- Road traffic and road approaches are regulated by the local governmental jurisdiction. Please contact the appropriate governmental jurisdiction for additional information.